

VZCZCXRO3478
OO RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC
DE RUEHBJ #4252/01 3230950
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 180950Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0918
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0526
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0445
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0162
RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0001

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 004252

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [IN](#) [TW](#) [CH](#) [RS](#) [CU](#) [PE](#) [CO](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 18 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: FOOD SAFETY, SED, TIBET,
STEALING SPACE TECHNOLOGY, APEC MEETINGS, PIRACY

BEIJING 00004252 001.2 OF 002

11. Key points at the November 18 afternoon MFA press briefing were:

- The United States should lift recently announced restrictions on Chinese imports "sooner rather than later."
- China hopes the United States will "retain" the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) in the next administration.
- China's position on the Tibet issue is "clear and resolute" and any attempt to split China is "doomed."
- The "so called story" that China steals space technology from the United States "has ulterior motives."
- President Hu Jintao will meet with leaders from the United States, Russia and Columbia during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Peru. The spokesperson had no information regarding a possible meeting between Hu and former KMT Chairman Lien Chan.
- "Relevant Chinese government departments" are "conducting rescue work" aimed at freeing the crew of a Chinese fishing vessel which was taken hostage by Somali pirates on November 14.

Food Safety

12. The United States should lift recently announced restrictions on Chinese imports "sooner rather than later," said Qin Gang at the November 18 regularly scheduled MFA press conference. China "regrets" that "after China had dealt with the crisis," the United States "took unilateral measures." The United States should "take China's concerns seriously" because they will "impact trade." China took the recent melamine crisis "seriously" and "took effective measures" to solve the problem, said Qin. China's examinations of exports are "very strict" and problematic products will be "recalled and destroyed." China hopes that the United States will "be objective and take a calm view" of the situation. Asked about the opening of Food and Drug Administration offices in China, Qin said that China "hopes the arrangement will help the two countries to strengthen cooperation on food safety."

Strategic Economic Dialogue

13. China hopes the United States will "retain" the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) which is an opportunity to discuss "long term issues." The SED "enhances mutual understanding and trust," said Qin. The spokesperson said he is "not sure how Barack Obama will view the issue" but the United States should attach great importance to maintaining the bilateral relationship with China "no matter which party is in power." Qin added that this is the message

which Obama gave to President Hu Jintao during their phone call.

Meeting of Tibetan Leaders in Dharamsala

¶4. China's position on the Tibet issue is "clear and resolute," said Qin when asked to comment on the meeting of Tibetan exiles in Dharamsala, India. Any attempt to separate Tibet from China is "doomed." Qin added that the Tibetan government in exile is "not recognized by any other government in the world." China has "taken note" that the Indian government has "repeatedly reiterated" that it "forbids separatist activities on its territory. China "hopes and believes this commitment will be honored."

Space Technology

¶3. The "so called story" that China steals space technology from the United States "has ulterior motives" and is made "in vain," said the spokesman when asked about Shu Quansheng's guilty plea for violating arms control laws.

APEC Bilateral Meetings

¶4. President Hu Jintao will meet with leaders from the United States, Russia and Colombia during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Peru, said Qin. The spokesman said specific arrangements are "still under discussion" and suggested that reporters "check the APEC website" for more updated information. Asked whether Hu would meet with former KMT Chairman Lien Chan during the meeting, Qin said that he did not have any relevant information.

Somali Pirates

BEIJING 00004252 002.2 OF 002

¶5. "Relevant Chinese government departments" are "conducting rescue work" aimed at freeing the crew of a Chinese fishing vessel which was taken hostage by pirates from Somalia on November 14, said the spokesperson. China "condemns all piracy and abductions at sea," said Qin. China is ready to "help solve the problem" based on the agreement of the Somali government and UN resolutions.

Aircraft Carrier

¶6. Chinese defense policy is "defensive in nature," said Qin when asked whether China plans to build an aircraft carrier. Qin referred the reporter to the Ministry of Defense for further comment.

Troops to Afghanistan

¶7. Asked whether China would consider sending troops to Afghanistan, Qin referred the reporter to a recent statement on the issue published on the MFA's website. Qin reiterated that China supports the efforts of the Afghan people to "maintain peace, promote economic development, and materialize peaceful reconstruction." However, China does not send troops abroad except as part of UN peacekeeping missions and won't send any to Afghanistan.

Congo Rebels

¶8. China expresses "growing concern" over the "deteriorating situation" in the Congo, said Qin in response to a question regarding reported rebel dissatisfaction with Chinese activities in that country. China hopes that the people of the Congo can "use peaceful means" to maintain peace and stability. Chinese businesses in the Congo work under the principle of "mutual gain and joint benefit" and conduct humanitarian work in the country in addition to mining. China hopes that the "mutually beneficial" relationship

will "continue to move forward."

Meeting Between Hu and Fidel

[19](#). Qin said that China and Cuba are "discussing" a potential meeting between Hu and Fidel Castro while Hu is in Cuba.